

# Swiss Watchmaking Industry

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criminal fraternity by which to convey their messages. In any case, such a linguistic feat as what virtually amounts to, "talking backwards" no doubt provokes no little indignation on the part of purists in the language concerned. The cutting is from *John o' London's* (March 19th):—

It may interest some of your readers to hear that in a slum district of the town of Berne (Switzerland) a "secret language" is used among the inhabitants (not only children) which is a form of gibberish interspersed with Yiddish and "thieves' talk" words, and is dubbed "Matten-Englisch." It is so long since I read or heard it that I have somewhat forgotten how it went, but some words anyway are transposed, i.e., the first syllable is taken off and tacked on at the end and the second following syllables put first, preceded by an "i," so that *Kloesterlé* becomes *Isterlekloe*. This language is so peculiar that it has drawn the attention of local philologists, and a number of articles on the subject have been written about it in Switzerland.

#### MISS BROWNE'S RECITAL. A NOTABLE APPRECIATION.

The musical critic of the *Daily Telegraph* (March 17th) thus records his impression:—

So much aimless singing is heard nowadays at West-end recitals that in effect many performances are little better than mere improvisations. Certainly a vocalist with definite aims is something of a rarity, and it was with a distinct sense of relief that one listened to Miss Violette Browne, who sang at the Wigmore Hall last night. Not for her the preliminary incursions into the easy by-ways of song, in order to test her technique and put her mettle to the proof. She began with a Bach aria, and at an early stage of the programme gave us Beethoven's dramatic "Ah, perfido." We were also privileged to hear for the first time in London, the soprano aria "Tu che di gel sei cinta," from Puccini's "Turandot." If any there were who went expecting to hear another "Un bel di," they must have been puzzled—and, perhaps, disappointed. This boldness of selection on the part of Miss Browne was justified, for she was always mistress of herself, and sang in a consistently calm, sanguine manner. We may not always have been in agreement with her interpretative ideas, but we could not fail to respect her for her obvious faith in the music she sang, and for her unequivocal mode of expression. She did much, too, to gain our sympathy by a winning quality of tone. Although her voice was of no great size, it reflected a sufficient variety of expressive shades to give contrast to widely differing songs, and her soft notes were so soft that by comparison those at the other end of the scale were quite big enough. Miss Browne had, too, a gift for impassioned utterance. Her Italian was mercifully free from double vowels. She had faults. Some of her upper notes were hard; occasionally in quick passages she was inclined to be fretful, and her English diction, though clear, was not always duly pointed.

#### 'BERNHARD MOSER' CONFERENCE.

Grossmutter lehnt am Krummstamm  
Des Birnbaums vor dem Haus:  
Sie schaut mit lieben Augen  
Nach reifen Früchten aus.

Und über ihrem Frieden,  
Im Astwerk eingehängt,  
Geduldet sich die Sense,  
Bis ihre Arbeit drängt.

are verses culled at random from an imposing array of poetical effusions, of striking merit, from the pen of our compatriot, Bernhard Moser.

On Monday last, Dr. E. Schwegler, of Zurich, held a conference at the "Union Helvetia," Gerard Place, W.1, with the object of making his hearers acquainted with a Swiss poet of our times whose talent in the direction of lyric poetry is deemed to rank as high as that of many masters of bygone days.

Those few who rewarded, by their presence, the splendid efforts made by Dr. Schwegler on behalf of his friend Bernhard Moser, found it difficult to make up their minds whether they were more impressed by the decidedly beautiful odes which Dr. Schwegler recited from Moser's work "Irrfahrt," or by his own masterly style in which he presented the Poet, his life and work, his sufferings past and present, as also his claim to our moral, intellectual and pecuniary help, to the audience.

The papers that the lecturer had prepared were indeed worthy of a far larger gathering of our co-citizens, but Dr. Schwegler may take heart that while in these days of extreme materialism many of the "finer sentiments" of mankind are often crushed out of existence, those who were privileged to follow his conference and recitations offer him their warm congratulations, not only on the quality of the work performed, but especially in reference to the touching loyalty towards, and the strong and sincere appeal made on behalf of, "a friend in need." To the poet himself, who in a few days

will reach his thirtieth birthday—unfortunately under conditions of health and finance that leave much to be desired—we would wish to convey the message: "Set your face against the difficulties of the future, as you have done so successfully in the past. Keep on speaking your language of the flowers, for the fragrance will in time become diffused and win over to your cause new friends and supporters who do appreciate the outcome of the high poetical and dramatic gifts which you have received from your Creator *pro bono publico*."

#### SWISS WATCHMAKING INDUSTRY. A PROMISING YEAR.

On more than one occasion we have already laid stress, in these columns, on the spirit animating the *élite* amongst watchmakers, who, in spite of new difficulties constantly cropping up, have ever been striving after perfection. We have further proof of it in the latest awards of the Neuchâtel Observatory, where severe tests are carried out for chronometers and where the best firms of Neuchâtel and Berne, which constitute the majority of watchmaking firms, win every winter a further great success.

This time prizes for series of exhibits have been awarded for the six best pocket and marine chronometers to the firms of Zenith, Paul Ditisheim, Movado, Nardin, Omega, Barbezat-Bôle and Valcain. The best marine chronometer was an "Nardini"; this excellent and old-standing firm winning, besides, all the first prizes in that category. The best ship-chronometer was this time a "Movado," and the best pocket chronometer, following a custom which will soon become a tradition, a "Zenith." Moreover, the chief watchmaking centres (excluding Geneva, which has its own observatory) have done brilliantly in this competition; some of the finest prizes went to Le Locle, La Chaux-de-Fonds and Bienna. The sense of perfection, the spirit of emulation, are virtues that are by no means waning amongst our watchmakers.

For the first time, a competition for clocks had been organised by the Neuchâtel Observatory. Excellent idea, considering that the clock, which is going through a period of real renaissance in Switzerland, is not merely an article of luxury, intended to decorate the hall of some villa or the antiquated drawing-room in a country house. The first prize winners in this competition were two of the biggest firms, Zenith and Favarger. Thus, no one will be able to apply to the Neuchâtel clocks that caustic remark about the ornamental "Three Graces" clock of Falconet, "One can see everything there except the right time." Beautiful and ornamental as they are, the modern clocks of Neuchâtel are intended in the first place to give the correct time. Thus, the newly created competition at the Neuchâtel observatory has proved an excellent innovation which has had a good beginning.

The latest statistics of the Federal Government on the Export trade of Swiss watchmaking in 1926 have not come as a surprise to anyone.

After the high figures of 1925, which were mainly due to the intense exportation that immediately preceded the introduction of new customs duties in England and Germany, a period of comparative slackness was to be expected. There is, however, no cause for alarm, seeing that in the course of that year the exports amounted to 18,800,000 pieces, worth altogether 258 million francs. These figures are very nearly the same as those for 1924, which was a normal year.

No doubt there is good reason to deplore the proportionate increase in the exportation of "movements alone" and detached parts, mainly due to the creation abroad of industries for the manufacture of watch-cases and the remounting of parts. But it is chiefly the customer who is to be pitied, for a watch whose parts have been put together abroad will never present the same guarantees in regard to wear and precision as the one that has been completed in the Swiss factories. However, the fact remains that the year which has just come to a close is by no means conspicuous as a bad one in the series that followed the war, and on the whole the watchmaking industry is holding out brilliantly in this period of universal crisis.

As the Fédération Horlogère points out, the present year has had a more promising beginning than the last, and there is good reason to hope that the commercial treaty with Germany which came into force on the 1st January, and the treaty with Czecho-Slovakia now being elaborated, will have a good influence on the flow of business.—*B.I.S.*

#### UNIONE TICINESE. FESTA SOCIALE.

Così, come i padri nostri si riunirono nello storico praticello del Grütli per manifestare il loro ardente desiderio di scuotere il giogo straniero, con il medesimo slancio patriottico noi ticinesi a Londra, ci riuniamo nelle vaste sale del Ristorante Monico, la sera dell'8 marzo, per ancora una volta partecipare all'annuale festa della Società nostra: l'Unione Ticinese. E questa festa fu una vera rivelazione. Manifestò di quanta

stima, di quanto amore l'Unione Ticinese seppe circondarsi, manifestò il desiderio nostro di riunirci, di vivere per qualche ora in ambiente ticinese, fra i nostri compatrioti, parlare quel nostro pittoresco dialetto. Era impossibile coronare con maggior successo il grande lavoro di preparazione onde la festa riuscisse veramente degna della Società nostra, fatto dall'instancabile nostro Presidente, Sig. W. Notari, e dagli indefessi membri dell'Unione Ticinese.

Più di trecento eravamo seduti nel International Hall del Monico, un mosaico di luci e colori, artisticamente preparato, rallegrato da fiori, da candelabri, dalla musica che accompagnava con le sue dolci note la melodia dei piatti, dei bicchieri, delle conversazioni... Il nostro amato vesillo era pure là, vigilante su tanta gaiezza.

Anche quest'anno, come per quelli passati, l'On. Ministro svizzero a Londra, Sig. Paravicini, ci onorava con la sua presenza e tra noi, in questa occasione, ebbimo la fortuna di avere la gentilissima figlia di Giuseppe Motta, questo nostro grande, caro ticinese che tanto onore fa alla Svizzera, al Ticino. Pure erano presenti il Sig. De Bourg e Sig. C. Rezzonico, rispettivamente primo e secondo segretario alla Legazione svizzera.

Alla fine di un eccellente e ben servito banchetto, l'On. Ministro s'alzò e con parole argute, facete e briose, espresse come ancora una volta si sentiva contento di trovarsi fra i ticinesi. Seguì il Presidente dell'Unione, Sig. W. Notari, che con quella sua ormai ben conosciuta eloquenza, da vero oratore, con parole calde e ispirate, seppe suscitare tanti battimani e evviva; a nome degli invitati parlò il Sig. Pfandler, della Swiss Mercantile Society. Il Sig. A. Meschini s'alzò e brevemente espresse auguri onde la Società nostra sempre abbia a prosperare.

Da un affezionato socio dell'Unione Ticinese, Sig. G. Cusi, sfortunatamente all'estero causa malattia, il nostro Presidente lesse un telegramma che nella sua concisione esprimeva come da lontano il suo pensiero volava alla Società:

"Benche lontano mente cuore con voi cari consoci on, Ministro amici tutti affettuoso convegno festa sociale auguro successo viva Ticino, viva Svizzera."

Pure dal Sig. Aldo Genoni di Plymouth giungeva la seguente lettera: "Cari compatrioti,—con voi con la mente ed il cuore, mi compiacio vedervi riuniti e divertenti. Godetela questa ben meritata allegria, questo breve intervallo dalle quotidiane occupazioni, che richiedono nella nostra industria la maggior assiduità e abnegazione. Ritempratevi nella tenacità di tener alta la nostra Bandiera in mezzo alla concorrenza sferzata del giorno d'oggi, fattaci dai nostri imitatori. Viva la Patria lontana e i suoi Figli dell'Unione Ticinese."

Al Presidente Motta veniva spiccato il seguente telegramma dal Ministro svizzero, Sig. Paravicini, a nome dell'Unione Ticinese della quale ne è Presidente Onorario:

"Unione Ticinese riunita simposio annuale commemorazione invia Onorevole concittadino Presidente e membri Consiglio Federale sensi attaccamento omaggi e devozione."

Come sempre, le altre Società svizzere a Londra erano rappresentate e precisamente:

Secours Mutuels dal Sig. Campart e signora, City Swiss Club dai sigg. G. Marchand e L. Jobin, Fonds de Secours dal sig. R. Dupraz, Schweizerbund dai sigg. L. Pache e Winckleman, Union Helvetia dal sig. Lehrian e signora, Swiss Mercantile Society dal sig. Pfandler e signora, Swiss Institute dal sig. Joss, Swiss Choral Society dal sig. Manzoni, Nouvelle Société Helvétique dal sig. Fred Suter. Per il *Swiss Observer* il sig. P. F. Boehringer.

La musica intonò il "Ci chiami o patria" che segnò la fine del banchetto, mentre nell'altra vasta sala vicina le prime battute di un waltz si facevano sentire, aprendo così l'animato ballo che durò sino alle due del mattino. La sala del banchetto si trasformò in sala café-concert e chi non desiderava seguire le danze, o voleva riposarsi dopo un vivace fox-trot, poté così divertirsi ascoltando gli abili artisti, sorbendo una diaccia aranciata, o sbocconcellando un gustoso éclair...

Ma, purtroppo, "ogni cosa mortale passa e non dura," e il tempo non volle fermare il suo corso nemmeno per i ticinesi... scoccarono le due e le battute del "God Save the King" gentilmente c'informarono che era arrivato il termine di questa nostra simpatica riunione. L'illusione nostra cadeva, dal Ticino, dove alcuni momenti prima credevamo di vivere, ci trovavamo in Piccadilly, nel centro di Londra...

Rimarrà però sempre in noi il profondo, nostalgico ricordo di questa festa che fu una vera apoteosi; una viva riconoscenza per chi seppe organizzarla, un sincero attaccamento all'Unione Ticinese, un ardente desiderio di trovarci ancora così, riuniti e allegri. ELENA LUNGLI.

Drink delicious "Ovaltine"  
at every meal—for Health!